

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application. Please amend claims 1, 24, 47, and 70 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method, implemented using a computer system, for providing a verifiable delivery payment coding, comprising:
  - collecting electronic notification information from a sender;
  - transmitting verification data configured to be included in a delivery payment coding;
  - receiving an item sent by the sender in an item delivery system, the item comprising the delivery payment coding including the verification data; and
  - verifying the authenticity of the delivery payment coding using the verification data; the verifying comprising:
    - comparing, using the computer system, the verification data obtained from the delivery payment coding to a verification database; [[.]] wherein, if the verification data obtained from the delivery payment coding matches corresponding verification data in the verification database, the method further comprises:
    - updating the verification database with a time or a location of the item in the item delivery system; and
    - using the electronic notification information to electronically transmit to the sender a notice containing the time or the location of the item in the item delivery system.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the verification data included in the delivery payment coding is machine readable.
3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the verification data included in the delivery payment coding is optically scanable.
4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the verification data is included in the delivery payment coding using at least one of a bar code and a PLANET code.
5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the delivery payment coding is included in an address label.
6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the delivery payment coding includes a visual representation of a monetary value associated with the delivery payment coding.
7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the item delivery system comprises the United States Postal Service.
8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the item comprises at least one of a mailpiece, a United States Postal Service Priority Mail package, a United States Postal Service Express Mail Package, a United States Postal Service Global Express Mail Package, and a United States Postal Service Global Express Guarantee Package.
9. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein transmitting the verification data further comprises utilizing at least one of regular mail, e-mail, facsimile, internet, and an interactive voice response system.

10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein transmitting the verification data further comprises communicating over a network.
11. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the verification data is provided in an encrypted format.
12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
  - receiving a request for the verification data included in the delivery payment coding; and
  - receiving a payment for delivery of the item.
13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 12, wherein at least one of receiving the request for the verification data included in the delivery payment coding and receiving the payment further comprises utilizing at least one of regular mail, e-mail, facsimile, internet, and an interactive voice response system.
14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 12, wherein at least one of receiving the request for the verification data included in the delivery payment coding and receiving the payment further comprises communicating over a network.
15. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein receiving the payment comprises at least one of sending a bill, debiting a checking account, debiting a credit card account, debiting a debit card account, and receiving cash.
16. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
  - delivering the item to a recipient; and

confirming the item delivery using the verification data from the delivery payment coding.

17. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein verifying the authenticity of the delivery payment coding further comprises:

receiving the verification data from the delivery payment coding after the item has been received in the item delivery system; and

determining the validity of the verification data obtained from the delivery payment coding.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein verifying the authenticity of the delivery payment coding further comprises returning the item to a sender if it is determined that the verification data is invalid.

19. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein verifying the authenticity of the delivery payment coding further comprises updating the verification database if it is determined that the verification data is valid, the update indicating that the verification data has been used.

20. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein verifying the authenticity of the delivery payment coding further comprises updating the verification database if it is determined that the verification data is valid, the update indicating that the item is in route through the item delivery system to a recipient.

21. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein the verification data is configured to be invalid after a period of time has passed after the verification data was provided.

22. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein transmitting verification data further comprises providing the verification data to a user through a user device, the user device configured to produce the delivery payment coding including the verification data.
23. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein the user device is located in at least one of a home, an office, a store, a retail center kiosk, and an office of an item delivery system operator.
24. (Currently Amended) A system for providing a verifiable delivery payment coding, comprising:
- a component for collecting electronic notification information from a sender;
  - a component for transmitting verification data configured to be included in a delivery payment coding;
  - a component for receiving an item sent by the sender in an item delivery system, the item comprising the delivery payment coding including the verification data; ~~and~~
  - a component for verifying the authenticity of the delivery payment coding using the verification data, the component configured for comparing the verification data obtained from the delivery payment coding to a verification database; [[.]]
  - a component for updating the verification database if the component for verifying indicates that the verification data obtained from the delivery payment coding matches corresponding verification data in the verification database, the updating including a time or a location of the item in the item delivery system; and

a component for using the electronic notification information to electronically transmit to the sender a notice containing the time or the location of the item in the item delivery system.

25. (Original) The system of claim 24, wherein the verification data included in the delivery payment coding is machine readable.
26. (Original) The system of claim 24, wherein the verification data included in the delivery payment coding is optically scannable.
27. (Original) The system of claim 24, wherein the verification data is included in the delivery payment coding using at least one of a bar code and a PLANET code.
28. (Original) The system of claim 24, wherein the delivery payment coding is included in an address label.
29. (Original) The system of claim 24, wherein the delivery payment coding includes a visual representation of a monetary value associated with the delivery payment coding.
30. (Original) The system of claim 24, wherein the item delivery system comprises the United States Postal Service.
31. (Original) The system of claim 24, wherein the item comprises at least one of a mailpiece, a United States Postal Service Priority Mail package, a United States Postal Service Express Mail Package, a United States Postal Service Global Express Mail Package, and a United States Postal Service Global Express Guarantee Package.

32. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 24, wherein the component for transmitting the verification data is further configured for utilizing at least one of regular mail, e-mail, facsimile, internet, and an interactive voice response system.
33. (Original) The system of claim 24, wherein the component for transmitting the verification data is further configured for communicating over a network.
34. (Original) The system of claim 24, wherein the verification data is provided in an encrypted format.
35. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 24, further comprising:  
a component for receiving a request for the verification data included in the delivery payment coding; and  
a component for receiving a payment for delivery of the item.
36. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 35, wherein at least one of the component for receiving the request for the verification data included in the delivery payment coding and the component for receiving the payment is further configured for utilizing at least one of regular mail, e-mail, facsimile, internet, and an interactive voice response system.
37. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 35, wherein at least one of the component for receiving the request for the verification data included in the delivery payment coding and the component for receiving the payment is further configured for communicating over a network.

38. (Original) The system of claim 35, wherein the component for receiving the payment is further configured for utilizing at least one of sending a bill, debiting a checking account, debiting a credit card account, debiting a debit card account, and receiving cash.
39. (Original) The system of claim 24, further comprising:  
a component for delivering the item to a recipient; and  
a component for confirming the item delivery using the verification data from the delivery payment coding.
40. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 24, wherein the component for verifying the authenticity of the delivery payment coding is further configured for:  
receiving the verification data from the delivery payment coding after the item has been received in the item delivery system; and  
determining the validity of the verification data obtained from the delivery payment coding.
41. (Original) The system of claim 40, wherein the component for verifying the authenticity of the delivery payment coding is further configured for returning the item to a sender if it is determined that the verification data is invalid.
42. (Original) The system of claim 40, wherein the component for verifying the authenticity of the delivery payment coding updates the verification database if it is determined that the verification data is valid, the update indicating that the verification data has been used.



43. (Original) The system of claim 40, wherein the component for verifying the authenticity of the delivery payment coding updates the verification database if it is determined that the verification data is valid, the update indicating that the item is in route through the item delivery system to a recipient.
44. (Original) The system of claim 40, wherein the verification data is configured to be invalid after a period of time has passed after the verification data was provided.
45. (Original) The system of claim 24, wherein the component for transmitting verification data is further configured for providing the verification data to a user through a user device, the user device configured to produce the delivery payment coding including the verification data.
46. (Original) The system of claim 45, wherein the user device is located in at least one of a home, an office, a store, a retail center kiosk, and an office of an item delivery system operator.
47. (Currently Amended) A solid computer-readable medium on which is stored a set of instructions for providing a verifiable delivery payment coding, which when executed perform stages comprising:
- collecting electronic notification information from a sender;
- transmitting verification data configured to be included in a delivery payment coding;
- receiving an item sent by the sender in an item delivery system, the item comprising the delivery payment coding including the verification data; and

verifying the authenticity of the delivery payment coding using the verification data included in the delivery payment coding, the verifying comprising:

comparing the verification data obtained from the delivery payment coding to a verification database[.];

updating the verification database if the comparing indicates that the verification data obtained from the delivery payment coding matches corresponding verification data in the verification database, the updating including a time or a location of the item in the item delivery system; and

using the electronic notification information to electronically transmit to the sender a notice containing the time or the location of the item in the item delivery system.

48. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 47, wherein the verification data included in the delivery payment coding is machine readable.
49. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 47, wherein the verification data included in the delivery payment coding is optically scannable.
50. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 47, wherein the verification data is included in the delivery payment coding using at least one of a bar code and a PLANET code.
51. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 47, wherein the delivery payment coding is included in an address label.

52. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 47, wherein the delivery payment coding includes a visual representation of a monetary value associated with the delivery payment coding.
53. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 47, wherein the item delivery system comprises the United States Postal Service.
54. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 47, wherein the item comprises at least one of a mailpiece, a United States Postal Service Priority Mail package, a United States Postal Service Express Mail Package, a United States Postal Service Global Express Mail Package, and a United States Postal Service Global Express Guarantee Package.
55. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 47, wherein transmitting the verification data further comprises utilizing at least one of regular mail, e-mail, facsimile, internet, and an interactive voice response system.
56. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 47, wherein transmitting the verification data further comprises communicating over a network.
57. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 47, wherein the verification data is provided in an encrypted format.
58. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 47, further comprising:  
receiving a request for the verification data included in the delivery payment coding; and

receiving a payment for delivery of the item.

59. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 58, wherein at least one of receiving the request for the verification data included in the delivery payment coding and receiving the payment further comprises utilizing at least one of regular mail, e-mail, facsimile, internet, and an interactive voice response system.
60. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 58, wherein at least one of receiving the request for the verification data included in the delivery payment coding and receiving the payment further comprises communicating over a network.
61. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 58, wherein receiving the payment comprises at least one of sending a bill, debiting a checking account, debiting a credit card account, debiting a debit card account, and receiving cash.
62. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 47, further comprising:  
delivering the item to a recipient; and  
confirming the item delivery using the verification data from the delivery payment coding.
63. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 47, wherein verifying the authenticity of the delivery payment coding further comprises:  
receiving the verification data from the delivery payment coding after the item has been received in the item delivery system; and

determining the validity of the verification data obtained from the delivery payment coding.

64. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 63, wherein verifying the authenticity of the delivery payment coding further comprises returning the item to a sender if it is determined that the verification data is invalid.
65. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 63, wherein verifying the authenticity of the delivery payment coding further comprises updating the verification database if it is determined that the verification data is valid, the update indicating that the verification data has been used.
66. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 63, wherein verifying the authenticity of the delivery payment coding further comprises updating the verification database if it is determined that the verification data is valid, the update indicating that the item is in route through the item delivery system to a recipient.
67. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 63, wherein the verification data is configured to be invalid after a period of time has passed after the verification data was provided.
68. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 47, wherein transmitting verification data further comprises providing the verification data to a user through a user device, the user device configured to produce the delivery payment coding including the verification data.

69. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 68, wherein the user device is located in at least one of a home, an office, a store, a retail center kiosk, and an office of an item delivery system operator.

70. (Currently Amended) A system for providing a verifiable delivery payment coding, comprising:

a means for collecting electronic notification information from a sender;

a means for transmitting verification data configured to be included in a delivery payment coding;

a means for receiving an item sent by the sender in an item delivery system, the item comprising the delivery payment coding including the verification data; ~~and~~

a means for verifying the authenticity of the delivery payment coding using the verification data included in the delivery payment coding, the verifying means for verifying configured for comparing the verification data obtained from the delivery payment coding to a verification database;[[.]]

a means for updating the verification database if the means for verifying indicates that the verification data obtained from the delivery payment coding matches corresponding verification data in the verification database, including recording a time or a location of the item in the item delivery system; and

a means for using the electronic notification information to electronically transmit to the sender a notice containing the time or the location of the item in the item delivery system.

71. (Original) The system of claim 70, wherein the verification data included in the delivery payment coding is machine readable.

72. (Original) The system of claim 70, wherein the verification data included in the delivery payment coding is optically scannable.
73. (Original) The system of claim 70, wherein the verification data is included in the delivery payment coding using at least one of a bar code and a PLANET code.
74. (Original) The system of claim 70, wherein the delivery payment coding is included in an address label.
75. (Original) The system of claim 70, wherein the delivery payment coding includes a visual representation of a monetary value associated with the delivery payment coding.
76. (Original) The system of claim 70, wherein the item delivery system comprises the United States Postal Service.
77. (Original) The system of claim 70, wherein the item comprises at least one of a mailpiece, a United States Postal Service Priority Mail package, a United States Postal Service Express Mail Package, a United States Postal Service Global Express Mail Package, and a United States Postal Service Global Express Guarantee Package.
78. (Original) The system of claim 70, wherein the means for transmitting the verification data further configured for utilizing at least one of regular mail, e-mail, facsimile, internet, and an interactive voice response system.

79. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 70, wherein the means for transmitting the verification data is further configured for communicating over a network.
80. (Original) The system of claim 70, wherein the verification data is provided in an encrypted format.
81. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 70, further comprising:
- a means for receiving a request for the verification data included in the delivery payment coding; and
  - a means for receiving a payment for delivery of the item.
82. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 81, wherein at least one of the means for receiving the request for the verification data included in the delivery payment coding and the means for receiving the payment is further configured for utilizing at least one of regular mail, e-mail, facsimile, internet, and an interactive voice response system.
83. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 81, wherein at least one of the means for receiving the request for the verification data included in the delivery payment coding and the means for receiving the payment is further configured for communicating over a network.
84. (Original) The system of claim 81, wherein the means for receiving the payment is further configured for at least one of sending a bill, debiting a checking account, debiting a credit card account, debiting a debit card account, and receiving cash.
85. (Original) The system of claim 70, further comprising:



a means for delivering the item to a recipient; and

a means for confirming the item delivery using the verification data from the delivery payment coding.

86. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 70, wherein the means for verifying the authenticity of the delivery payment coding is further configured for:

receiving the verification data from the delivery payment coding after the item has been received in the item delivery system; and

determining the validity of the verification data obtained from the delivery payment coding.

87. (Original) The system of claim 86, wherein the means for verifying the authenticity of the delivery payment coding is further configured for returning the item to a sender if it is determined that the verification data is invalid.

88. (Original) The system of claim 86, wherein the means for verifying the authenticity of the delivery payment coding updates the verification database if it is determined that the verification data is valid, the update indicating that the verification data has been used.

89. (Original) The system of claim 86, wherein the means for verifying the authenticity of the delivery payment coding updates the verification database if it is determined that the verification data is valid, the update indicating that the item is in route through the item delivery system to a recipient.

90. (Original) The system of claim 86, wherein the verification data is configured to be invalid after a period of time has passed after the verification data was provided.

91. (Original) The system of claim 70, wherein the means for transmitting verification data is further configured for providing the verification data to a user through a user device, the user device configured to produce the delivery payment coding including the verification data.
92. (Original) The system of claim 91, wherein the user device is located in at least one of a home, an office, a store, a retail center kiosk, and an office of an item delivery system operator.